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THE FIFTH BOOK OF VERSE

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EDWIN MARKHAM

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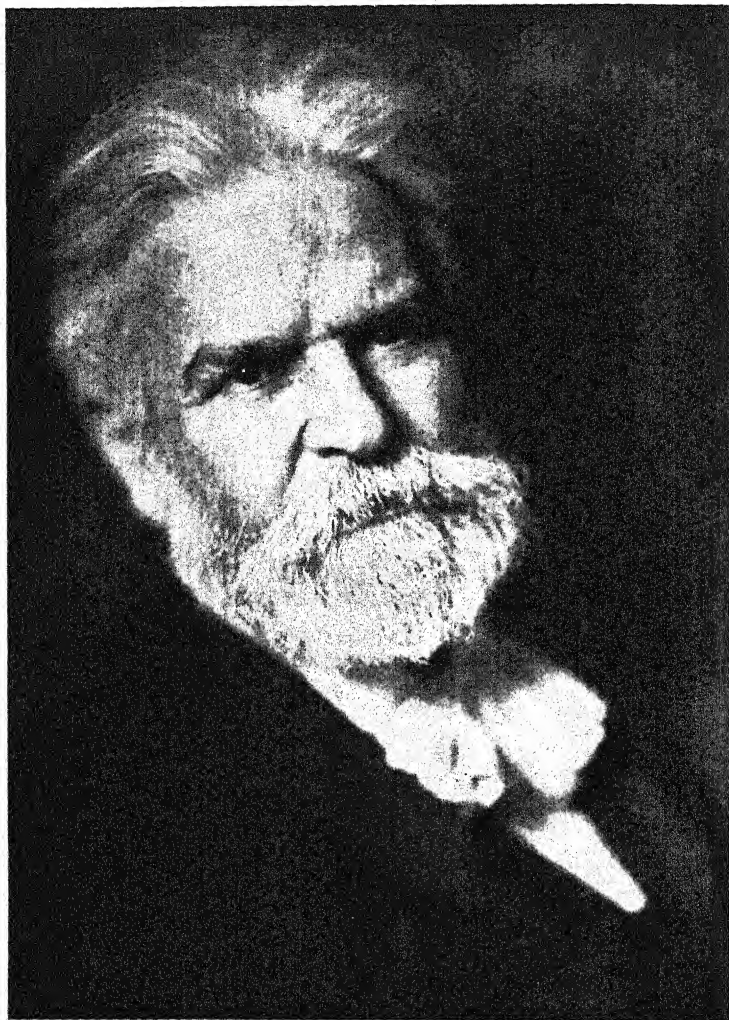
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Orders for any of the above volumes (printed or unprinted) may be sent to Edwin Markham, West New Brighton, N. Y., or to Florence Hamilton, Secretary and Lecture Manager, 44 Morningside Drive, N. Y. C.





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EDWIN MARKHAM

NEW POEMS
Eighty Songs at Eighty

THE FIFTH BOOK OF VERSE

By
EDWIN MARKHAM
MEMBER OF THE ACADEMY, author of
THE MAN WITH THE HOE
and Other Poems



Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc.

Garden City 1932 New York

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FIRST EDITION

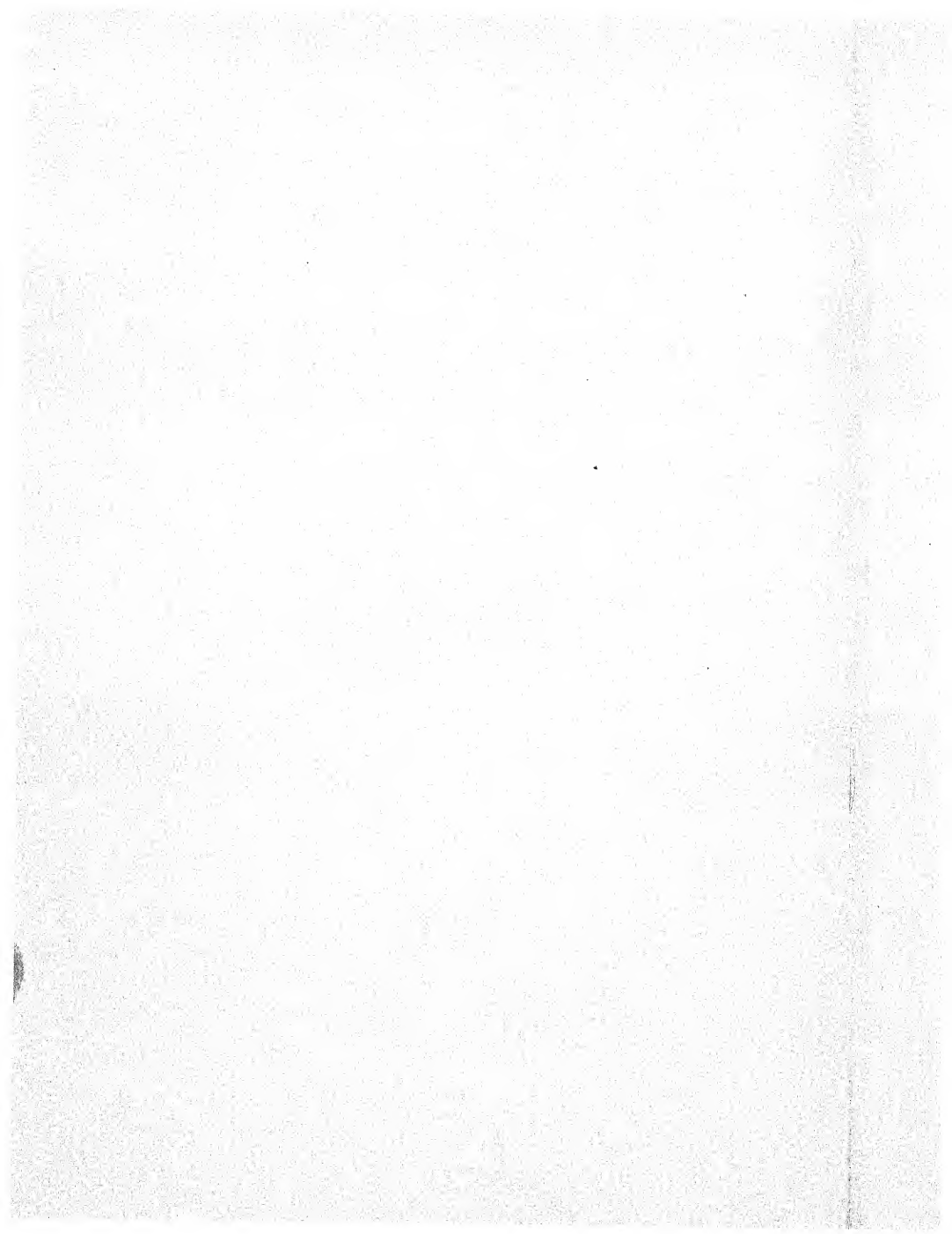
Dedication

I affectionately dedicate this new volume to the cordon of friends who have so generously given their time and strength to organize and consummate the celebration in honor of my 80th birthday at Carnegie Hall, April 24th—the day on which I will be eighty years and one day old on life's romantic road.



Defeat may serve as well as victory
To shake the soul and let the glory out.
When the great oak is straining in the wind,
The boughs drink in new beauty, and the trunk
Sends down a deeper root on the windward side.
Only the soul that knows the mighty grief
Can know the mighty rapture. Sorrows come
To stretch out spaces in the heart for joy.

EDWIN MARKHAM.



Publisher's Note

THIS is the fifth book of verse from the pen of Edwin Markham in the long stretch of thirty-two years since 1899, when his first volume, *The Man with the Hoe, and Other Poems*, appeared—a volume that suddenly caught the excited attention of the world and has reached the extraordinary sale of 250,000 copies. It is still selling in large numbers.

The Man with the Hoe is frequently called “the supreme poem of the century,” also “the battle-cry of the next thousand years.”

This remarkable poem was translated into forty languages and became the battlefield of a long controversy, covering thousands of sermons, editorials, paragraphs, cartoons, parodies, heated protests, heated defenses, philosophic discussions; and these extended into many lands.

The Hoe-poem deals with the most vital and anxious problem of our civilization: it led off the strong tendency toward social democracy in our era. Mark Sullivan makes this fact plain when, in *Our Times*, he devotes an opening chapter to the long furore excited by this poem in the early dawn of the twentieth century.

The present volume, *New Poems*, is Edwin Markham's first volume of verse after a silence of twelve years; and it is published in commemoration of his eightieth birthday. It finds him writing with all his old vigor. Most of the

poems in this volume have been written within the last five years—many of them within the last year. Some of them have a light lyric touch, while others deal with the deeper meanings of our existence. Every reader will certainly notice the wide dimensions of this poet's work.

In the last five years, Edwin Markham has written many long poems, highly significant poems—*Groping for the Way*, *Listening at All Shrines*, *An Hour with Destiny*, *Lincoln Lyrics*, *Entries in the Judgment Book*, *A Vision of Christ Set Free*, *An Ode to Bunker Hill* (written at the request of the city of Boston), *Our Israfel* (the prize poem on Edgar Allan Poe), *The Ballad of the Gallows-Bird* (published in *The American Mercury*, 1926), *Ode to Boston* (also written at the request of the city of Boston, for her 300th anniversary). His latest poem is *Washington, the Nation Builder*, written at the request of the Government, to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Washington's birth. These poems will appear later in a series of chap-books.

It is clear that Edwin Markham has carried his creative energy into the very autumn of his years. His genius is as widely hailed now as it was hailed in that early time, in 1899 and 1900, when he became suddenly famous on two hemispheres.

It is not surprising, therefore, that only a few months ago Henry L. Mencken, our most exacting and fastidious critic, said: "Edwin Markham stands in the forefront of American poetry, and his *Man with the Hoe* is the greatest poem ever written in America."

On one of his birthdays, not long ago, ninety American poets expressed their homage to the dean of American poets in a volume called *A Wreath for Edwin Markham*.

Charles Hanson Towne, the widely known poet and critic, voiced his devotion in this fashion:

*"Once, on a Western coast, where the winds and the sea are wild,
The gods leaned down and blessed a new-born wonder child.
They gave him the stuff of dreams, the gift of iron song,
A voice that would cry unafraid in the face of the whole world's wrong."*

Edwin Arlington Robinson, that master of poetic narration, added this gay quatrain:

*"Time, always writing, sees no trace
Of all he writes on Markham's face.
On Markham's face he writes in vain:
Apollo rubs it out again."*

George Sterling, the premier poet of the Far West, expressed his homage to Markham in this ringing couplet:

*"Homer's head and Milton's art,
Shelley's soul and Lincoln's heart!"*

About the time that these men were expressing their opinions, Robert Underwood Johnson, poet, critic, and secretary of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, said, "A poem by Markham is a national event"; and William Dean Howells followed with the words: "Edwin Markham is the greatest of the living Americans."



A Last Word

LET me here express my gratitude to Anna Catherine Markham and to Florence Hamilton for their long devotion to the fortunes of this book—my gratitude for their many critical comments and excellent suggestions in the work of selecting these eighty poems from my heaps of recent poems that have not yet gone into the glory of print.

Let me also caution the young untrained critic who, in the past, has caused me to suffer because he fancies that the iambic pentameter line can contain only ten syllables. The following eleven-syllable line from this volume is metrically correct:

Under the eternal scourge of wind and rain.

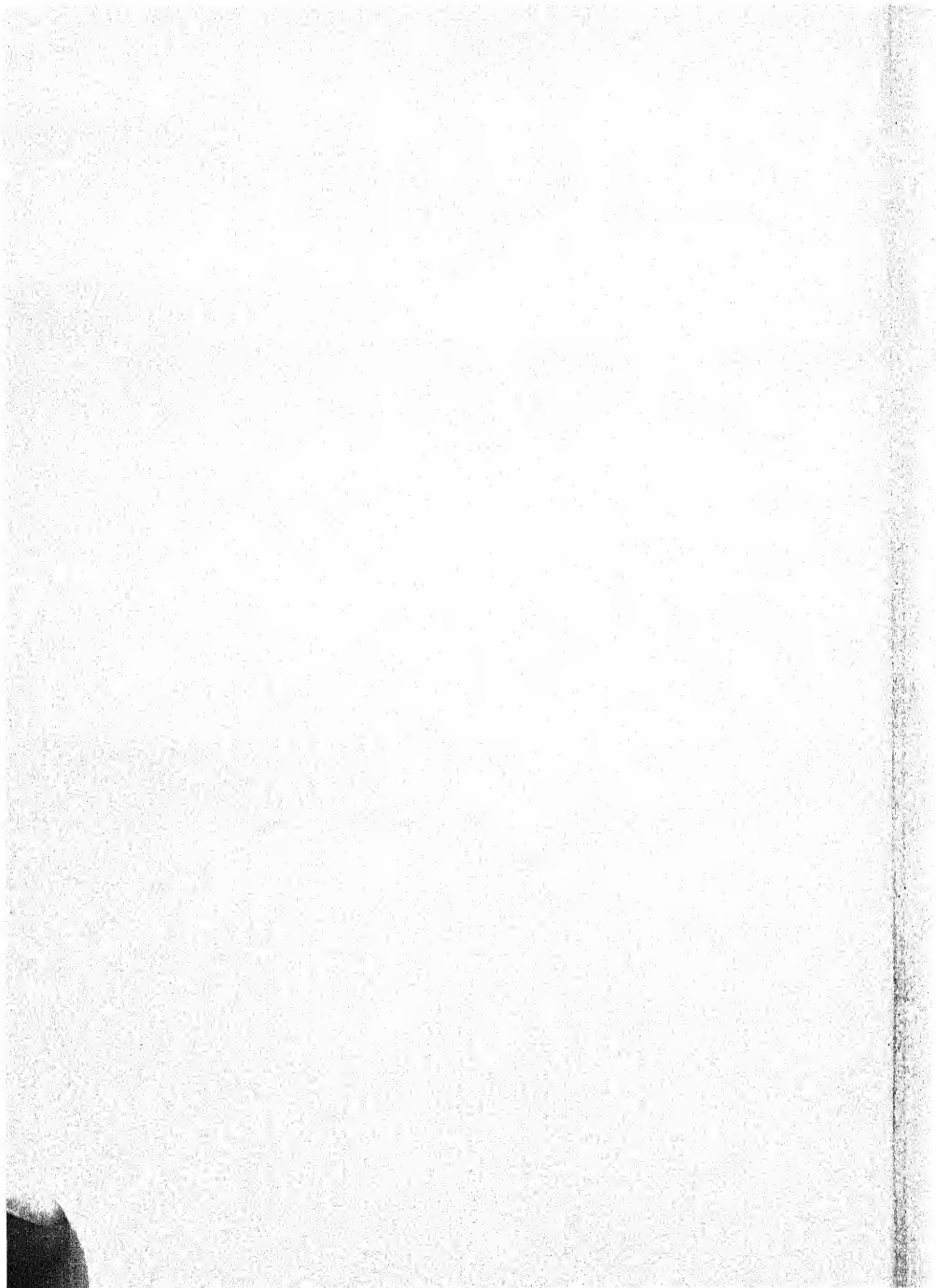
These excess syllables are mere grace notes, and they give a certain flight and freedom to the lines. Many lines of this sort are in this volume—also in volumes by Milton, Shakespeare and Tennyson.

Edwin Markham:

West New Brighton, N.Y.



November,
1931



THE LOOK AHEAD

*I am done with the years that were: I am quits:
I am done with the dead and old.
They are mines worked out: I delved in their pits:
I have saved their grain of gold.*

*Now I turn to the future for wine and bread:
I have bidden the past adieu.
I laugh and lift hands to the years ahead:
"Come on: I am ready for you!"*





Contents

OAKS IN ACORNS

	PAGE
LAPLACE	3
YOUR WHISPERED SECRET	4
THE NEW TRINITY	5
NO SELF TO SERVE	6
THE AVENGERS	7
THE THIRD WONDER	8
FORTUNES OF THE SEA	9
LORD OVER LIFE	10

LYRICS OF LOVE AND DEATH

TOGETHER	13
ARABY	14
THE DREAM OF HER	15
IMPERIOUS LOVE	16
HEART OF MY HEART	17
THE 'CELLO'S CRY	18
THE SONG UNHEARD	19
CRUSHT WINGS	20
HELEN	21
THE GREATER THINGS	22
A BOAT SONG	23

	PAGE
PAID IN FULL	24
NO ESCAPE	25
ION IN THE HOUR OF DEATH	26
ELEGY FOR ELINORE	27
A LOST LOVE	28
A PRAYER AT THE ALTAR OF HERMES	29
LOVE DEFENDED	31
A SONG AT SUNSET	32

SONNETS OF LOVE AND DEATH

LOVE SEEKING AND FINDING: I AND II	35
MERLIN'S SISTER	37
ONE PLACE TO KNEEL	38
THE LONG QUEST	39
HIGHER THAN EARTH	40
HELLAS AGAIN	41
YOUR BEAUTY	42
SEEKING BEAUTY	43
THE FIRST ROSE	44
THE BURIAL	45
THE HEART'S CRY	46
A ROSE FOR THEE	47
LOVE AND DEATH	48
BRIDALS BEYOND: I AND II	49
GOD'S FINAL YEA: I AND II	51

SONNETS OF VALOR AND VISION

	PAGE
POWER	55
SAILING ORDERS	56
GLEAMS OF THE GOLDEN AGE	57
THE NAIL-TORN GOD	58
WORLD OF MY HEART	59
ART AND HER MYSTERY	60
THE NIGHT MOTHS	61
THE GREATER GLORY	62
THE SORROW IN THINGS	63
THE GAIN	64
THE CHANGELESS	65
BOND OR FREE?	66
IMMORTABLE	67
THE DRIFTING CROWDS	68
LORENZO DYING	69
THE NIGHT OF BRAHM	70

A MEMORY OF YOUTH

THE ENCHANTER	73
---------------	----

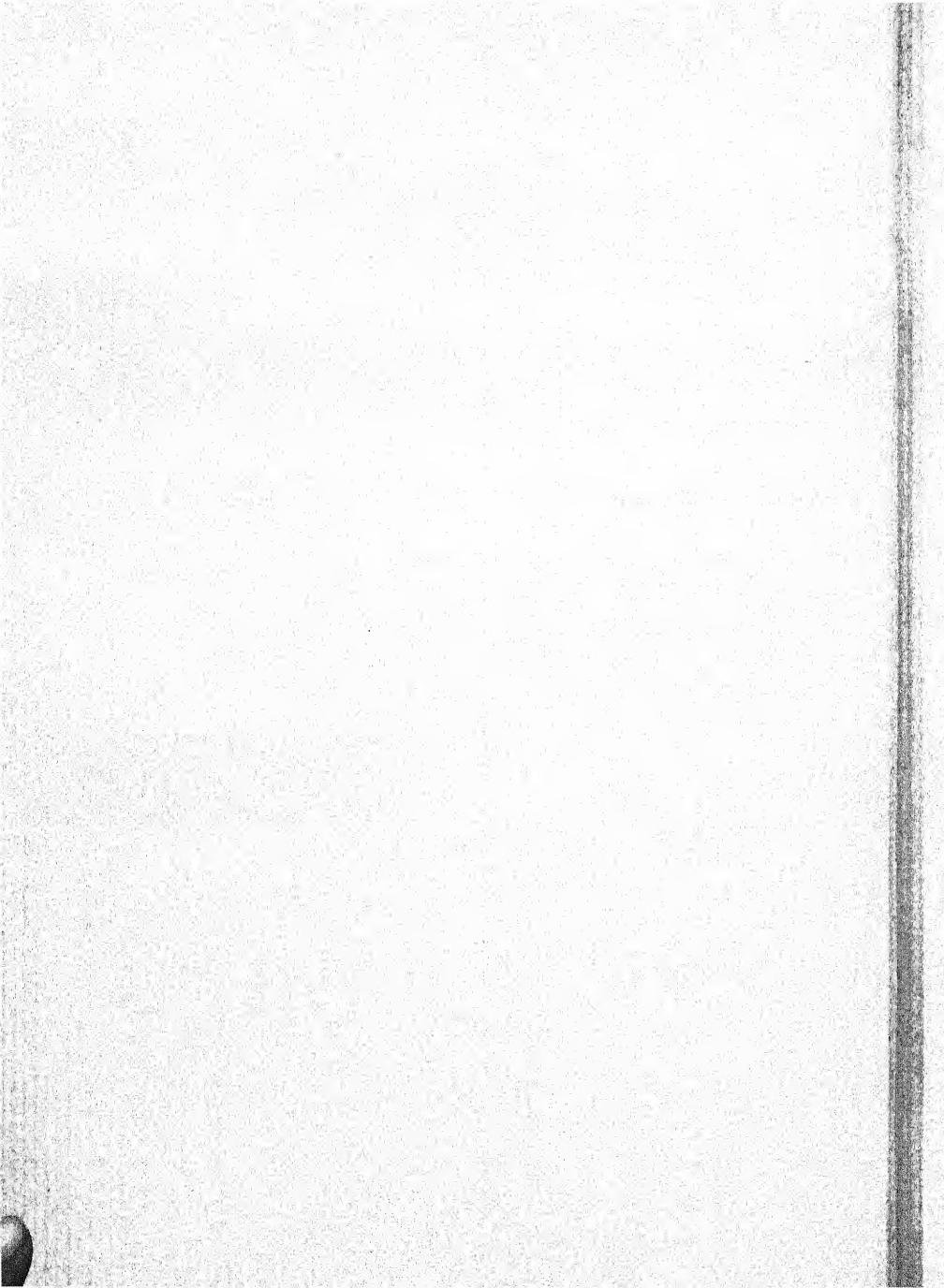
SONGS TO THE DIVINE MOTHER

THE DIVINE MOTHER REMEMBERED	81
THE MOTHER OF THE MANY NAMES	82
DIVINE APHRODITE	85

LOOKS INTO LIFE

	PAGE
THE TOILER: THE HOE-MAN OF THE AGES	89
IF HE SHOULD COME	93
WALT WHITMAN	95
THE ESCAPE	99
THE CURLEW	100
NO SANCTUARY	102
PAN ENCOUNTERED	104
THE STREET OF THE GALLANT GENTLEMEN	106
EL DORADO	108
PROVENCE	109
THE UNSEEN PILOT	111
WHY?	112
THE UPWARD MARCH	113
THE LOOK AHEAD	114

OAKS IN ACORNS



THE LOOK AHEAD

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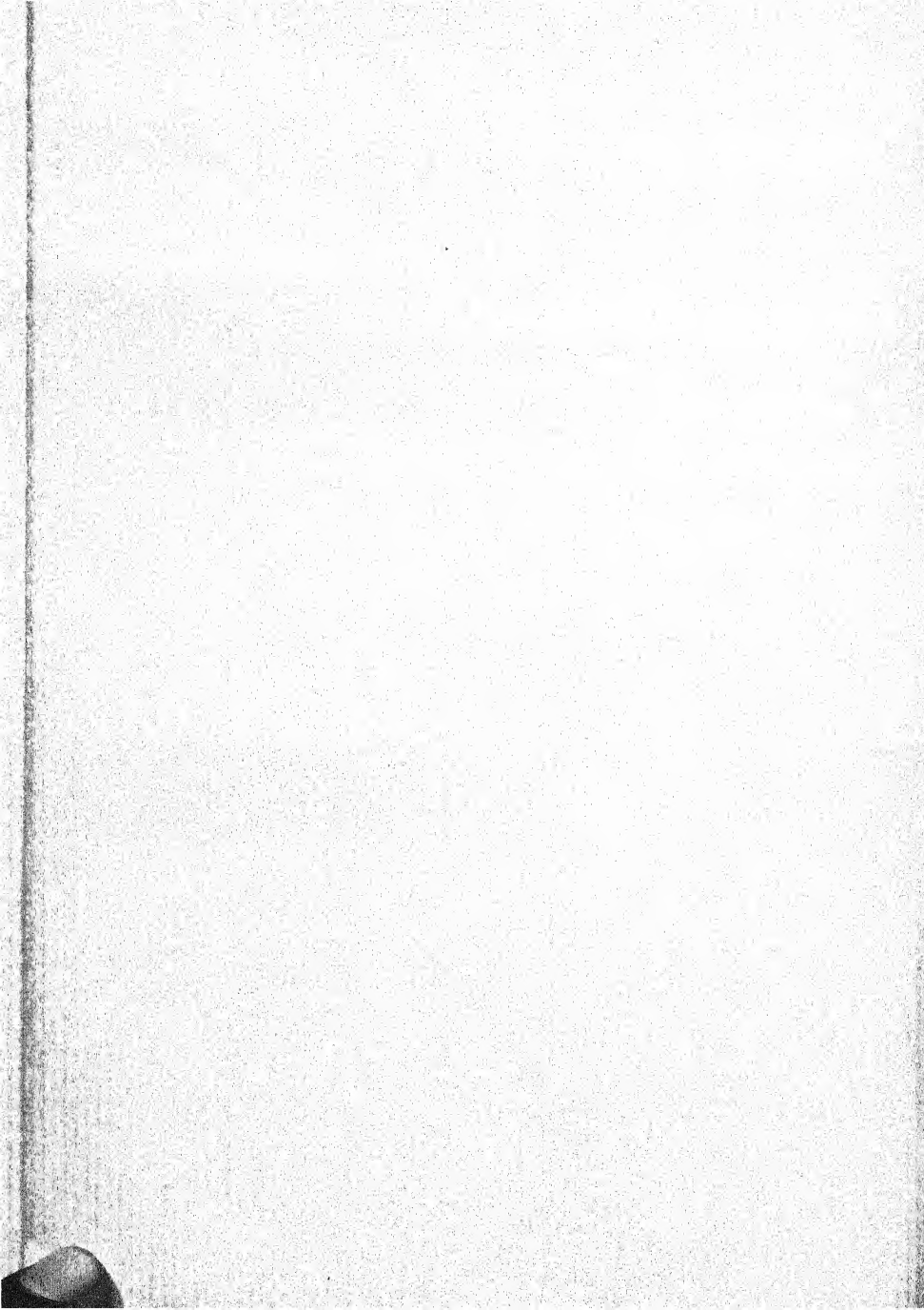
Now I turn to the future for wine and bread:

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"Come on: I am ready for you!"





Contents

OAKS IN ACORNS

	PAGE
LAPLACE	3
YOUR WHISPERED SECRET	4
THE NEW TRINITY	5
NO SELF TO SERVE	6
THE AVENGERS	7
THE THIRD WONDER	8
FORTUNES OF THE SEA	9
LORD OVER LIFE	10

LYRICS OF LOVE AND DEATH

TOGETHER	13
ARABY	14
THE DREAM OF HER	15
IMPERIOUS LOVE	16
HEART OF MY HEART	17
THE 'CELLO'S CRY	18
THE SONG UNHEARD	19
CRUSHT WINGS	20
HELEN	21
THE GREATER THINGS	22
A BOAT SONG	23

	PAGE
PAID IN FULL	24
NO ESCAPE	25
ION IN THE HOUR OF DEATH	26
ELEGY FOR ELINORE	27
A LOST LOVE	28
A PRAYER AT THE ALTAR OF HERMES	29
LOVE DEFENDED	31
A SONG AT SUNSET	32

SONNETS OF LOVE AND DEATH

LOVE SEEKING AND FINDING: I AND II	35
MERLIN'S SISTER	37
ONE PLACE TO KNEEL	38
THE LONG QUEST	39
HIGHER THAN EARTH	40
HELLAS AGAIN	41
YOUR BEAUTY	42
SEEKING BEAUTY	43
THE FIRST ROSE	44
THE BURIAL	45
THE HEART'S CRY	46
A ROSE FOR THEE	47
LOVE AND DEATH	48
BRIDALS BEYOND: I AND II	49
GOD'S FINAL YEA: I AND II	51

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	PAGE
POWER	55
SAILING ORDERS	56
GLEAMS OF THE GOLDEN AGE	57
THE NAIL-TORN GOD	58
WORLD OF MY HEART	59
ART AND HER MYSTERY	60
THE NIGHT MOTHS	61
THE GREATER GLORY	62
THE SORROW IN THINGS	63
THE GAIN	64
THE CHANGELESS	65
BOND OR FREE?	66
IMMORTABLE	67
THE DRIFTING CROWDS	68
LORENZO DYING	69
THE NIGHT OF BRAHM	70

A MEMORY OF YOUTH

THE ENCHANTER	73
---------------	----

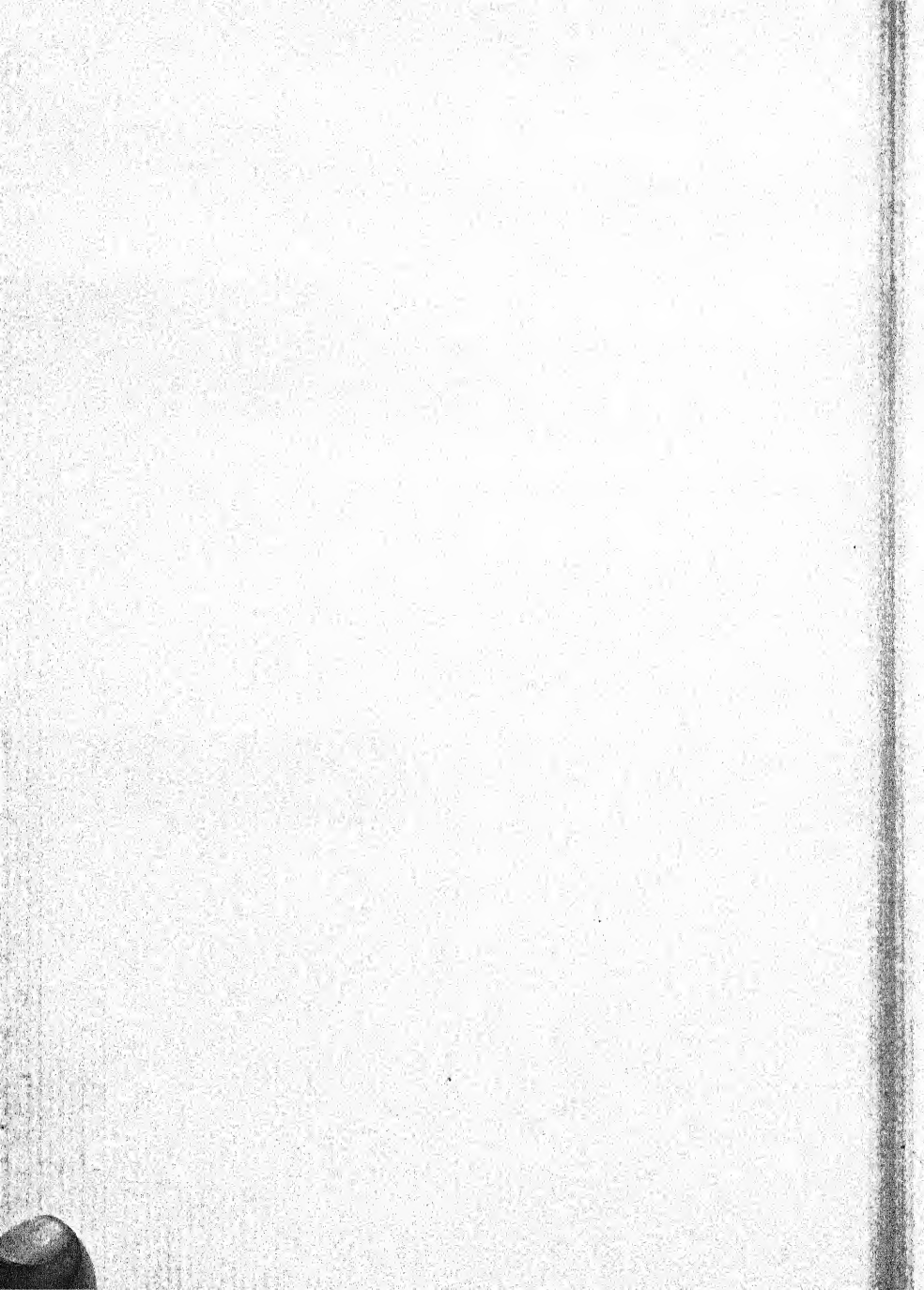
SONGS TO THE DIVINE MOTHER

THE DIVINE MOTHER REMEMBERED	81
THE MOTHER OF THE MANY NAMES	82
DIVINE APHRODITE	85

LOOKS INTO LIFE

	PAGE
THE TOILER: THE HOE-MAN OF THE AGES	89
IF HE SHOULD COME	93
WALT WHITMAN	95
THE ESCAPE	99
THE CURLEW	100
NO SANCTUARY	102
PAN ENCOUNTERED	104
THE STREET OF THE GALLANT GENTLEMEN	106
EL DORADO	108
PROVENCE	109
THE UNSEEN PILOT	111
WHY?	112
THE UPWARD MARCH	113
THE LOOK AHEAD	114

OAKS IN ACORNS



Laplace

As HE lay dying, into his mighty brain
Shone suddenly a luminous thought above
The darkness: "Science gives but little gain:
Nothing is real for men but one thing—Love!"

Your Whispered Secret

You told it to him and his oath was deep:

Well, here's a question for your wisdom-shelf:

Why did you hope some other one would keep

The secret that you could not keep yourself?

The New Trinity

THREE things must a man possess if his soul would live,
And know life's perfect good—
Three things would the all-supplying Father give—
Bread, Beauty and Brotherhood.

No Self to Serve

Why does He make our hearts so strangely still,
Why stands He forth so stately and so tall?
Because He has no self to serve, no will
That does not seek the welfare of the All.

The Avengers

THE laws are the secret avengers,
And they rule above all lands:
They come on wool-soft sandals,
But they strike with iron hands.

The Third Wonder

"Two things," said Kant, "fill me with breathless awe:
The starry heaven and the moral law."
But I know a thing more awful and obscure—
The long, long patience of the plundered poor.

Fortunes of the Sea

Many are called, but few are chosen.

—BIBLE.

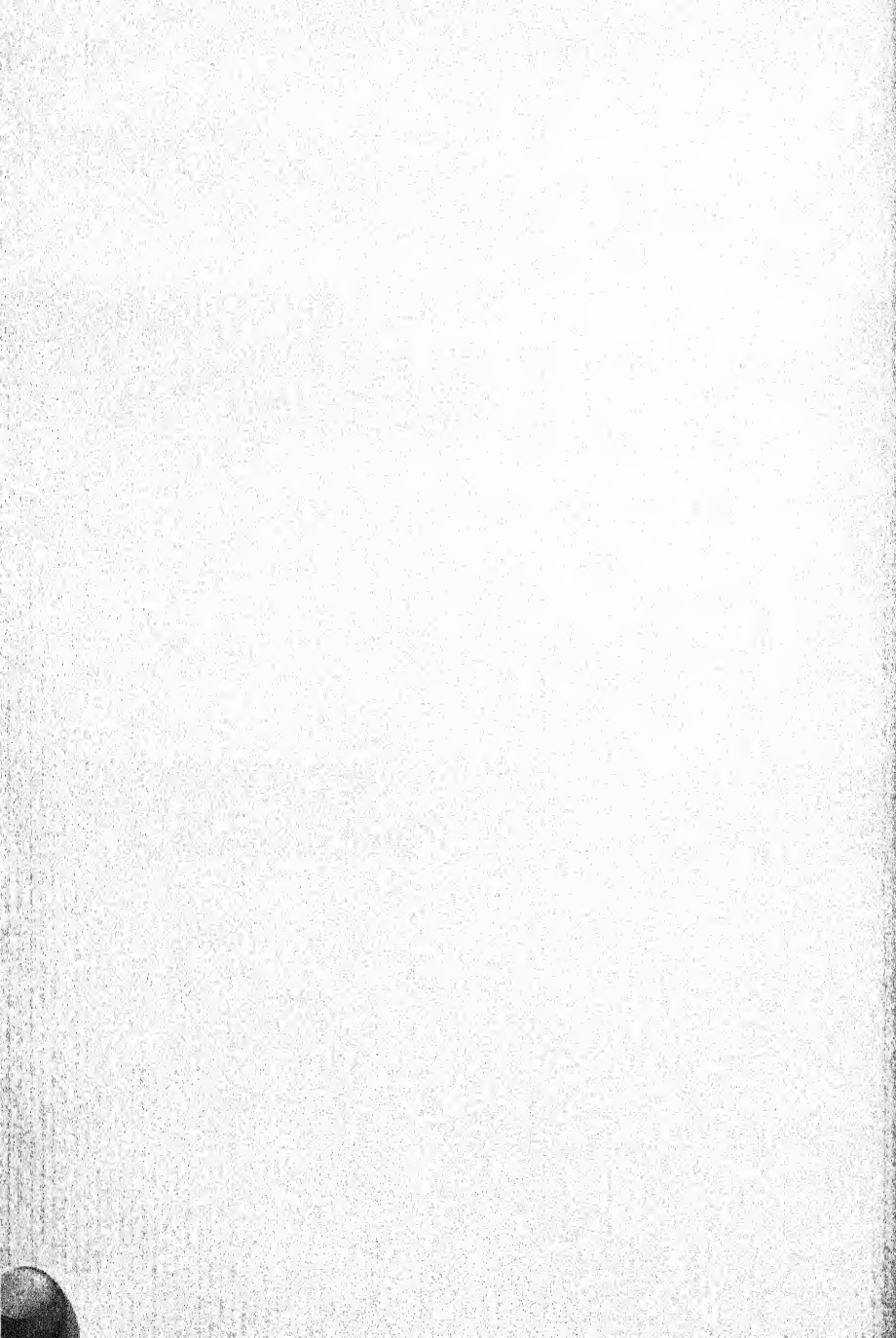
A FEW arrive, a glorious few
Survive the sea, a tempest-stricken crew.
But the many go down, a vast storm-beaten band—
Go down on that floating wreck they took for land.



Lord over Life

GIVE me heart-touch with all that live,
And strength to speak my word;
But if that is denied me, give
The strength to live unheard.

LYRICS OF LOVE AND DEATH



Together

THIS is the hour when the heart beats high:

At last we are taking the road together:

Bind on your sandals, sing to the sky:

I'll stick in my cap a wild hawk's feather.

The field-lark shouts from the windy oats,

The cricket its ancient joy is repeating:

The world is full of her rapture notes,

But all I hear is my wild heart beating!

Araby

OH, THERE is waiting for my heart
A fountain and a friend:
I'm off to-day for Araby,
Where all the rainbows end.

I'm up and off for Araby,
A-carrying my pack;
And all the stars of heaven are in
The bundle on my back!

The Dream of Her

THERE is a pool in a leafy wood,
Under a shadowed hill:
There in the night a single star
Comes silverly and still.

That pool is my untroubled song,
Far from this earthly stir:
The lonely star that smolders there
Is my long dream of her.

Imperious Love

THE lesser gods are decorous
And with a meek petition wait;
But Love comes, fixing his own hour,
And hammers at the gate.

He comes, announcing final terms,
And never cries his purpose twice;
For he has half of earth to give,
And all of Paradise!

Heart of My Heart

THE rose is the heart of the garden
That hides in my hills of the West;
But you are the heart of the garden
That hides in my breast.

The moon is the heart of the river
That carries her beautiful beams;
But you are the heart of the river
That carries my dreams.

The 'Cello's Cry

ONCE more the 'cello's cry!
It sets my heart astir:
Again I thrill with dreams of youth,
And memories of her.

Hark, hark, that note once more,
That mad, that magic strain:
It carries all the dreams of men,
And all their ancient pain.

The Song Unheard

I WOULD I were a thrush to sing
All the long afternoon:
At evening time a nightingale
To warble in the moon.

For then your heart would sometimes hark:
My song might reach your ear,
The song I sing to my soul alone,
The song you never hear.

Crusht Wings

IN THIS inexplicable world,
Long shattered by some old mischance,
Love's wings are crusht against the wheel
Of mortal Circumstance.

Is there some place with kinder stars,
Some friendlier, far, translunar realm
Where Love is lord of destiny
And Joy is at the helm?

Helen

SWEET are the cries of the piccolos
And dear the wind-harp's dying fall;
But what are all their little woes
When once the bugle fills the hall?

Fair are the little stars that gleam
And swing upon their bright careers;
But all their glory turns to dream
When once the morning star appears.

Great ladies can their beauty wear
A little while upon the floor;
But all their beauty turns to air
When Helen glitters thru the door!

The Greater Things

THE way you turn your head
Or utter your parting cry,
Is more to your Lover's wistful heart
Than the poms of earth and sky.

Ah, more in my mortal fight
Is your courage-kindling face
Than the cry of the bugles on the hill
To the runner winning the race.

Your shy hand touching my hair
And your last look at the door,
Are more than a desert-well to a man
Who faints on the desert floor.

A Boat Song

Row, row, row:

Let the bubbles glitter and go.

O joy, O joy, for the nearing shore,

And the sunset flash on the feathering oar!

Row, row, row,

For my heart leaps up to know

That some one looks from the cabin door

With a shading hand toward the fading shore.

Row, row, row,

As the whitening billows blow;

For there is a woman who waits for me

With a kiss that sweetens earth and sea.



Paid in Full

THE moon shears up on Tahoe now:
A panther leaps to a tamarack bough.
She crouches, hugging the crooked limb:
She hears the nearing steps of him
Whose rifle sent the puff of smoke
That stretcht her mate beneath the oak—
The mate that never came again
To lie with her in the secret den.

Her eyes burn beryl, two yellow balls,
As Fate counts out his last footfalls.
A lightning spring, a demon cry,
Carnivorous laughter to the sky!
Her teeth are fastened in his throat
(The moon rides in her silver boat.)
And now one scream of long delight
Across the caverns of the night!

But, alas, in the cabin below what lack
For the woman whose lover will never come back!

No Escape

Do you think you'll elude me in death
When you fade as a delicate breath,
And are gone beyond reach of my hand
On the roads of the Luminous Land,
Beyond reach of my question and cry
In the hush of some ultimate sky?
Do you hope to evade and to be
A lost drop in the infinite sea?

No, Loris, there is no escape—
Flesh or spirit—whatever the shape.
You may turn to a phantom and ride
On the wind: I will be at your side!
You may turn to a nymph of the wave:
I will track you at last to your cavel
You may rise to the throne of a star:
I will climb to the sphere where you are!

Ion in the Hour of Death

CLEMANTHE, you know well that I must die,
And now my heart is thrilled by your wild cry:
"Tell me, sweet Ion, shall we meet again?
When I go on to death—what then, what then?"

Yes, I will answer you, Clemanthe: I,
That dreaded question askt of every sky,
Of every ocean and of all the streams,
Of the great stars that are the source of dreams.
But all were silent, dear one, all were dumb:
They had no knowledge of a life to come.
But as I look upon your shining face,
I see a light as from a hidden place;
And suddenly I know that there is fate
In your great love and beauty: there is power
Undying—something greater than this hour.
Yes, we shall meet again, Clemanthe—wait!

Elegy for Elinore

BEAR her to the tomb: at last
All the years and tears are past.
Lightly touch her, burial clods:
She was fashioned by the gods.
Maidens, bring the laurel boughs:
She was faithful to her vows.

Let there be no ritual read:
Flutes will tell what should be said.
Lay upon her breast a rose:
It is not to dust she goes.
In Love's rapture she will rise
To her bridal in the skies.

A Lost Love

IN THE hush of the night's deep hour,
When the primrose had broken to flower,
A flight of dim ghosts went by,
And one had a wistful cry:

"I died and I climbed into light
From the world whose name is Night.
But without *her* there, I found
Even Heaven was a lonely round.
So I have returned to find
The heaven I left behind.
I have sought for her over the years,
With a yearning as tender as tears.
But, alas (O wild heart-beat!)
I passed her once on the street.
I passed but I did not know;
For she went as a leaf might blow
In a sudden wind overhead
I am still with the lonely dead,
Where I wander the roads and cry
For the one I let go by.
Ah, the ages may wane for men
Ere she comes my way again!"

A Prayer at the Altar of Hermes

AH, WEARY I come to your altar, and have nothing to lay
As an offering there but the sandals I wore on the way.
Oh, take them: I'll cut from the willow a pilgrim pipe for
my hands,
And will go on barefoot and fluting over the lonely lands.

Hear me, O Hermes, finder of paths—hear me, O hasten-
ing one,
As you fare by the land of the dreams and the gates of the
sun;
For my bride—now called to the dead—goes wistfully on
in your train:
She is there in the strangeness alone, and I am left here
with the pain.

No more will she dance in laughing when the April
comes,
Nor tell me when sun-quicken'd cedars are fragrant with
gums—
Nor ever go singing when wild grapes are purpling the
vines,
And the winds waken chords in the boughs of Thessalian
pines.

O god of the roads, if you love us, be tender to her,
And show her the way that is free of the briar and burr.
Ah, guide her with beautiful words as her young feet
depart
In that tangle of paths, in that loneliness new to her heart.

Love Defended

Love, that makes the dust aspire,
All the gods acclaim you;
Yet men foul your feet with mire,
And their lips defame you.

In my hand a sword of song,
Terrible as lightning,
Quivers to avenge your wrong
When your face is whitening.

Love, ordained for starry air,
Dauntless deeds and soarings,
Built for rapture and despair,
Fashioned for adorings—

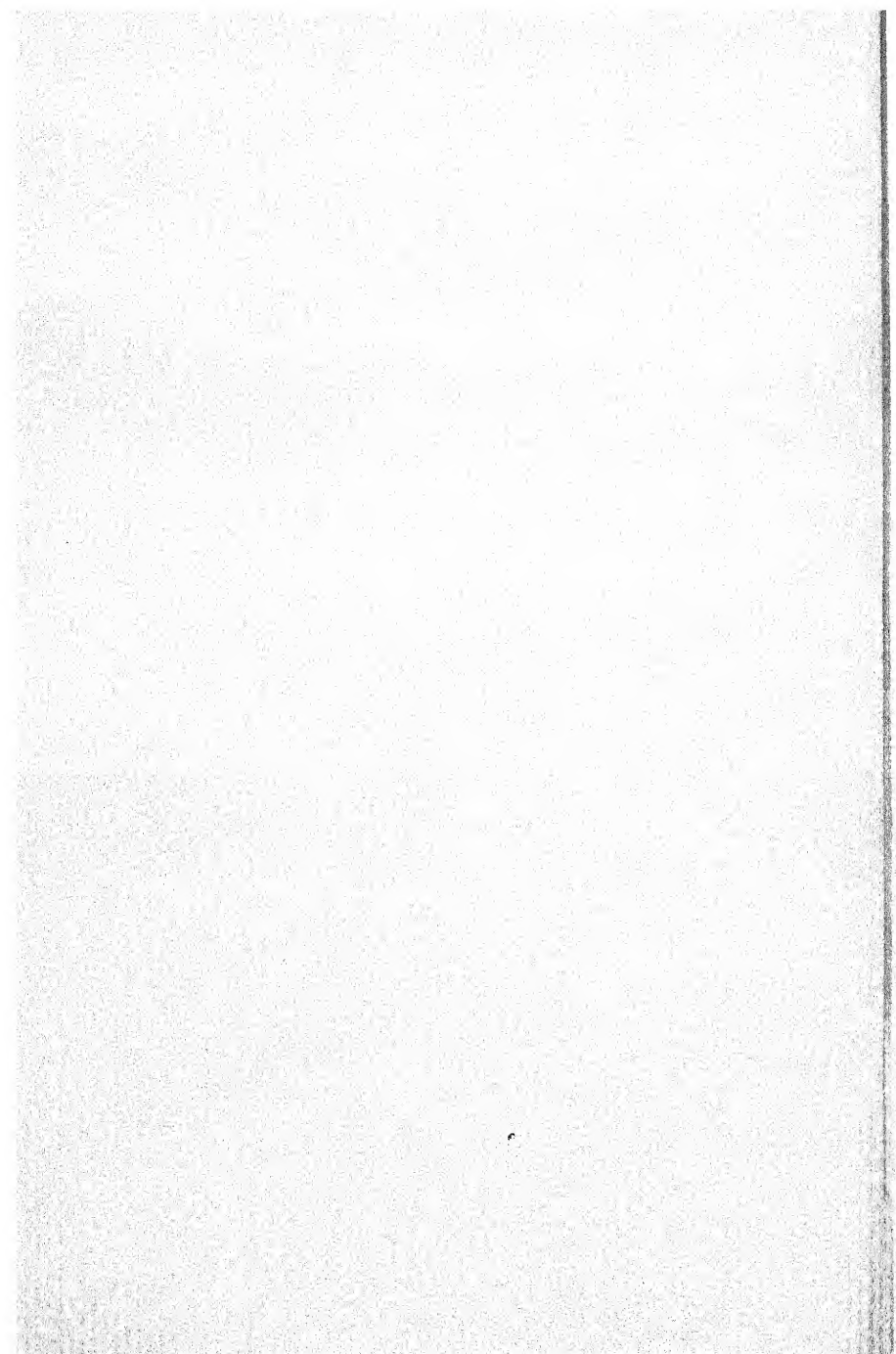
Love, the noblest of things made,
Let all stars attend you—
Love, so trampled and betrayed,
Let my songs defend you!

A Song at Sunset

A LONE thrush sings as the night begins,
A rich wild song as the darkness falls;
And a secret peace creeps over the world,
Over the starry halls.

So may I sing on the edge of death,
When the dark descends and the hours depart;
So may the mystic peace creep down
Over my tired heart.

SONNETS OF LOVE AND DEATH



Love Seeking and Finding

I

Love came to me one soft ethereal night,
Looked in my face and took me by the hand,
And led me down into a lonely land.
It was a place of graves: the stones were bright:
The moon was flying overhead in light.
Then at the rustle of a startled leaf
I turned me, and it was not Love but Grief,
And as he sighed his face grew strangely white.

Stooping I searched the grasses on a mound,
And lo, a song-bird sat upon her nest,
And from the grave ascended a sweet sound
Of nestlings stirring at the mother-breast,
And looking up I saw a golden boy:
It was not Grief that led me—it was Joy!

2

And then Joy took me by the hand and sang;
And light quick feet began to whisper by,
And new strange stars began to climb the sky.
His face grew whiter as the raptures rang:

From peak to peak the young Apollos sprang,
For lo, I saw you coming from on high,
Coming to meet me with a joyous cry,
To draw out of the heart the hidden pang!

Then all the East grew rosy with a rush
Of glories that were tender as God's eyes;
And I beheld above the mortal hush
The ancient angels looking from the skies.
And then I heard a Voice, "Let this thing be:
For this I stretched out continent and sea!"

Merlin's Sister

You drew me with your wonder-face, and shed
A loneliness on all the roads that are—
All save the one road lighted by your star.
And now you lead me with a mystic thread,
Feeding my hunger with immortal bread,
Slaking my thirst with Love's immortal wine—
Things that have made men deathless and divine,
Given strength to go heroic to the dead.

You have been dowered with magic. By whose hand
Was magic laid upon you? From what land,
Out of what realm, unkindled by our sun,
Appeared great Merlin when the spell was laid?
For you are Merlin's sister: you have made
All roads in the whole world lonely—all but one.

One Place to Kneel

LOVE (who was God at the beginning) made
This world of stars and belted it with beams,
And breathed into the heart the deathless dreams.
Yet Love that is so mighty, he can fade
Into a sigh, into a wandering shade.
His face grows pallid at a flippant word,
His glories wither when the jesters gird,
And hide his body with the burial spade.

O world that is turning life to husk and hull,
Be reverent a little at Love's shrine
If reverence in this age be possible.
Leave us Love's altar, leave his bread and wine.
Yes, leave a husht place where our souls can feel
The touch of God—one place where we can kneel.

The Long Quest

I SEARCHED for you down all the lonely years:
Sometimes I saw you looking from a hight—
Sometimes I saw you poised for wingéd flight.
Yet when I reached you after many tears,
My lips were dumb, my heart was husht with fears.
I was as one who stands on sinking ships,
Till one wild night I felt your trembling lips:
Then I was kindred to the saints and seers!

Now, after hungerings, you bring me bread;
After long death, the rising from the dead;]
After the crashing seas, the harbor bar;
After the heated sands, the cooling well;
After the stones, the fields of asphodel;
After the storm-torn night, the morning star.

Higher than Earth

I COME to take you for my wingéd mate—
Not as the pleasure-hunter do I come,
But as a warrior stript for martyrdom
In some last rally by the final gate:
I have the strength to dare, the strength to wait.
But poor is love if it knows only earth—
Poor if not lifted to the higher birth,
Linked to the gods in some translunar fate.

Are you ready to join me, woman of song and flame,
In this, the romance of the Infinite—
A love for which the earth has yet no name,
A great love that the higher world has lit,
A love that leads to the shore of the last sea,
A love that looks out on Eternity?

Hellas Again

You came, Francine, all faith and fire and air—
Came as a goddess whispering happy cries
And opening portals into secret skies
Where young gods dance with hyacinthine hair,
The young creators taking the bright dare,
Lit with a beauty from the Inward Place,
The light seen once on your seraphic face,
The light the builders of the morning wear.

'Twas then you thrilled me with immortal dreams,
And I was back in the Greece of long ago.
I stood on cliffs where the gods of Hellas are—
Saw Aphrodite soar from ocean streams,
Saw Nereids brighten where the billows blow,
Saw young Apollo headed with a star.

Your Beauty

YOUR beauty has the spell of the unknown,
A wonder inaccessible, afar,
Mysterious and secret as a star:
I feel in it Love's softly whispered moan,
The sense of tears, the sense of the alone.
And yet your beauty makes me dream again,
Stirs like the thunder-march of armèd men,
Like banners on the wind of battle blown.

I know the mighty hopes that dare the grave,
The moon of midnight whitening all the seas,
Know Sappho's cry to the cold Leucadian wave;
For when I think of you I think of these—
Think also of the songs that Shelley gave,
And Roland's horn among the Pyrenees.

Seeking Beauty

I HAVE sought beauty, knelt at every shrine
Where her white hand has lit a lovely light,
Where her pale feet have paused or taken flight.
I have tasted in all lands her sacred wine,
Seen her come forth heroic and divine,
Ready to live for love or die for dreams;
And yet I saw a lovelier thing, it seems,
Once when I knew you were forever mine.

Upon a night when all the Seraph Seven
Came forth to harp before the Thrones of Heaven,
And all the vestals danced in silver shoon,
I saw you rise from earth, divinely pale,
And, like a flower of chastity, unveil
The beauty of your body to the moon.

The First Rose

THIS flower will stay even when the winter blows,
And it will cheer me when the boughs are bare.
One night you wore it in your glinting hair:
The 'cello was in parley with our foes,
The violin was crying its sweet woes;
And I went wondering that you should wear
A rose unless to make the blossom fair:
Why waste the roses adding rose to rose?

This flower has ever been our love's one token:
Once ages gone, in the old Arena's light,
When I stood stript for red carnivorous fight,
Your heart remembered tho no word was spoken:
You threw a rose to me—your faith unbroken—
While Babylonian lions shook the night!

The Burial

VIRGILIA, if ever on the road

Love hears some dark indictment and falls dead,
We twain must bear him to his burial bed,
And dig with quiet hands his last abode.
But let no rite be read nor funeral ode:

If anything, let some wild tears be shed,
Let some wild poppies wind his silent head,
And so have done life's tragic episode.

When Love is wounded once, ah well-a-day!

No tears nor travail of the world shall save,
Nor ever give again the dream he gave:
So, as you turn to go your separate way,
Oh, make your peace with Sorrow if you may,
But leave me dead upon his passionate gravel

The Heart's Cry

Out of the world's incurable grief, I call—

Out of a passion that will never die:

From lone Gethsemane's haggard trees I cry:

"Can you be true to Love in spite of all,

Be true as granite in the mountain wall?"

One thing I also ask the Awful Powers—

That I shall stand full-armed in life's last hours—

In the great night of death stand white and tall.

Let it be so, that I may have the might—

If you should fail—to track you down the night,

Find you in Hell wherever you may grope,

Hold close to my heart until your dead heart beat;

Then carry you home out of the death of hope,

And finally lay you ransomed at God's feet.

A Rose for Thee

AN INVERTED SONNET

DOWN a wild garden at the edge of dawn
I wandered, and the world was far withdrawn.

It was *our* garden in the secret glen
Stirred with the old sweet wonder of the night:

The trees were husht: God's peace had come again:
Earth softly sang in melodies of light.

I turned into the bower. With the old quick start,
I reacht to pluck a red rose from our tree

In the glad wish to take it home to thee. . . .
Then a wild tumult rusht across my heart,

A thought, my Love, a thought of where thou art;

For suddenly I remembered—thou art dead,

That Heaven's white splendor shines around thy head,
And that we two are years and worlds apart!

Love and Death

Now Love and Death walk with me side by side—

Love on the right hand, Death upon the left,

And we go calmly down the deepening cleft—

Love that was dream and was so long denied,

Love that can lift till man is deified,

Love that can make the heart sing or grow still;

Death too that knows that Love must have her will

On earth or else beyond the Last Divide.

Now I hear whispers from the lips of Fate:

“Life lays a ban upon these gifts of time:

They come too early or they come too late.

But harken, Lover, to a wonder rhyme

Which falls from the high mysteries above:

‘Fear not, for Love is Death and Death is Love.’”

Bridals Beyond

I

WHEN death shall enter silently the door,
Hush all my singing, take me by the hand,
And lead me softly to the Silent Land,
Shed no wild tears and let no lips deplore
That I now walk a new romantic shore;
But let young lovers come with dance and flute,
Sing lightly of the lover who is mute,
And speed his flight into the Evermore.

For I'll not go as one who is thru with love,
And thru with life; but go as to a hall
Lit for a bridal, where the mating dove
Croons in the eaves, and where the minstrels call,
And the bride descends from the winding stair above,
Convoyed by singing seraphs, white and tall.

2

Yes, death leads on to deathless bridals, where
Life's old adventure will begin again
In worlds beyond the daring dreams of men.
There will I see her in ethereal air,

Among the shining sisterhoods, who wear
The wisdom of Eternity. On the hour
She will descend as lightly as a flower,
Descend the wide chryselephantine stair.

She will come singing, lighted by a star,
From kingdoms where the young Immortals are;
And earth's old griefs will vanish: I shall be
No more heart-hungering, no more alone,
For she will be immortally my own—
Mine in the marriage of eternity.

God's Final Yea

I

I SAW her in a wind of vision stand
Aloft upon the summit of all worlds:
Under her feet the stars were strewn as pearls,
And far below her was the starless land.
Above I saw the Golden Heaven expand;
And none was higher than she save only God,
Who builds all orbs or breaks them with a rod,
And shakes the crumbling ages in his hand.

Then lifting up imploring arms she cried,
"My Love is lost, his bed with death is made
And Hell is on him as a garment laid!
God, let me enter Hell: I am his bride:
I find no heaven in all these heavens above:
Take my white throne and give me back my Love!"

2

She ended, and all woe was in her word:
An hour-long silence on the bright worlds fell;
For a sweet hour there was sweet rest in Hell.
God pondered, for his heart was strangely stirred

As a deep sea with all the brightness blurred.

Then softly as the whisper of a bell

A still voice sounded down the starry well,

And all dark hells and all the bright heavens heard:

“I am the God of lovers and their fates;

And even one love that falls defeated, jars

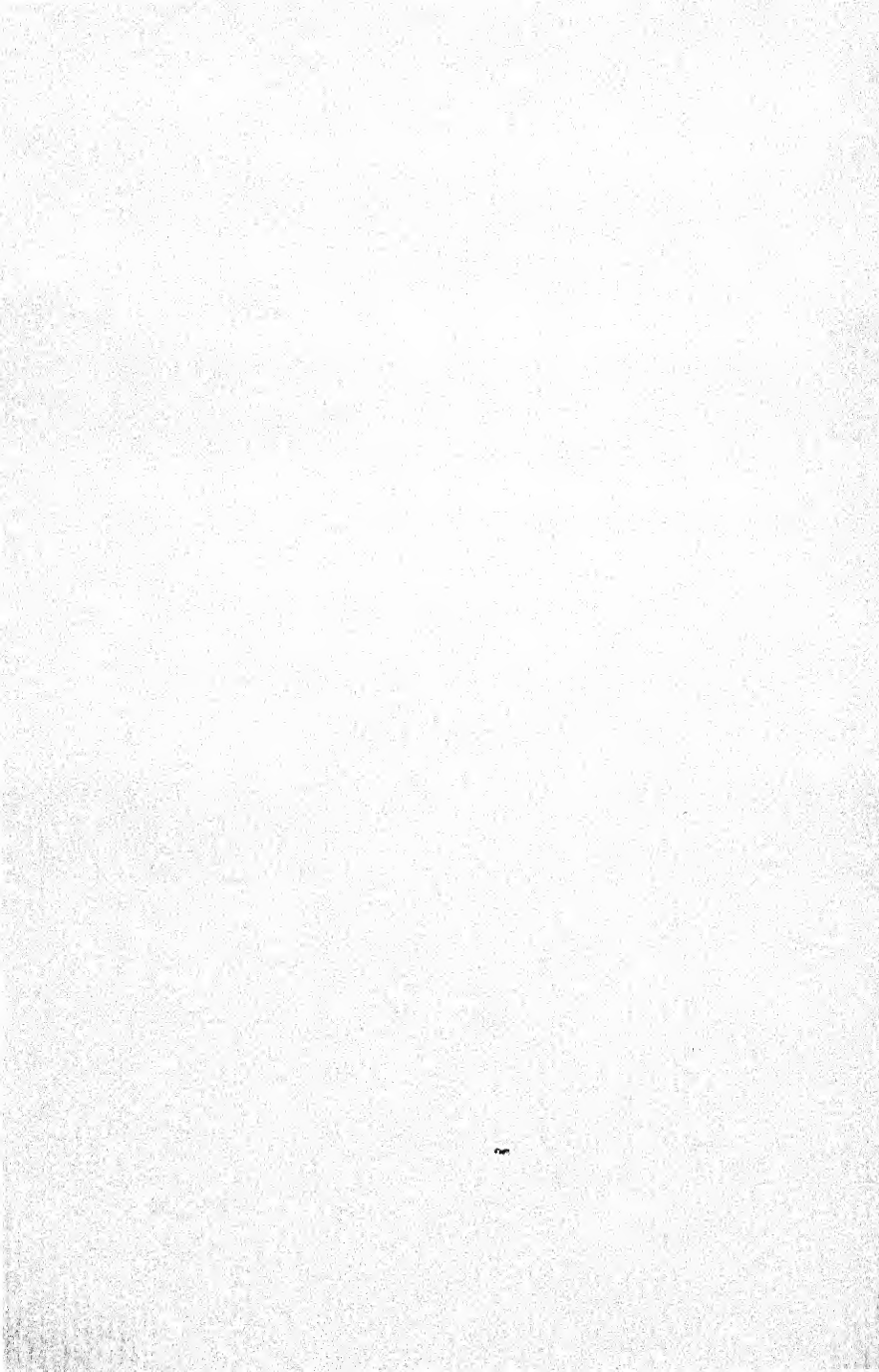
The props of ancient heavens and ancient stars.

Your lover shall return: I open the gates:

There is no safety even for my throne

Till I have drawn each lover to his own!”

SONNETS OF VALOR AND VISION



Power

In 1930, *The English Poetry Review* offered an international prize for a poem on Power. Five-hundred poems were submitted; this sonnet was the winner.

ALL worlds lie folded in the arms of Power:
The live seed lifts its earth-load and is free:
The filmy moon lifts the eternal sea.
Armed with this might, the insect builds its tower
And lives its little epoch of an hour.
Man's giant thought, in ever-daring flight,
Explores the universe, the Ancient Night,
And finds infinity even in a flower.

But there is something that is greater still,
The strength that slumbers in Heroic Will.
Yes, there is something greater than them all:
It is the high translunar strength that streams
Downward on man at some imperious call,
And gives him power to perish for his dreams.

Sailing Orders

I HEAR the dipping of the unseen oars:

Out of what darkness have we come, and why?

And whither plunging under this unknown sky,

Toward what untraveled, far, uncharted shores?

No answers reach us tho the heart implores:

No pilot knows on what mysterious strand

These billows break, nor to what secret land

The ship is steering as the whirlwind roars.

What shall we do in life's tempestuous hours,

Hurled at the mercy of Inscrutable Powers?

One thing can help when the trampling storms o'er-
whelm—

Be ready for death when death is on the blast;

Upstart with a shout, ready to seize the helm,

And go down gripping the rudder firm to the last.

Gleams of the Golden Age

THE Golden Age appeared and crumbled then.

Yet afterward it gleamed and vanisht. Twice

Earth saw the glimmering gates of Paradise—

Once when the glory of Greece shone over men

And life's romantic races came again,

When glad young deities began to sing

By secret river and sequestered spring,

And laughing gods peopled the purple glen.

Once more the Heaven-doors seemed to swing ajar

In the great days of Chivalry, in days

When Deity was Woman, when her praise

Girdled the world, and she could make or mar

Knights that adored in the old heroic ways—

When Love and sweet Religion had one star.



The Nail-Torn God

HERE in life's chaos make no foolish boast
That there is any God omnipotent,
Seated serenely in the firmament,
And looking down on men as on a host
Of grasshoppers blown on a windy coast,
Damned by disasters, maimed by mortal ill,
Yet who could end it with one blast of Will.
This God is all a man-created ghost.

But there *is* a God who struggles with the All,
And sounds across the worlds his danger-call.
He is the builder of roads, the breaker of bars,
The One forever hurling back the Curse—
The nail-torn Christus pressing toward the stars,
The Hero of the battling universe.

World of My Heart

GIVE me no world where poetry is dead—

Where never the sea-girls skim the wonder sea,
Where no wild flute-notes blow from Arcady,
Where no blithe maenads run with lyric tread,
With dewy vine-leaves twined around the head.

Give me the song of Beauty and her sky,
Give me a world stirred with a woodland cry;
Where cliffs are roof and April boughs are bed.

Ah, they were wiser in the days of old,
Days when the young gods and the sportive races
Shined out along the high Parnassian places.
O world of men, too cold your hearts, too cold!
I leave your grief to follow the vanisht faces,
To follow the glad feet to the realms of gold.

Art and Her Mystery

ART is disturbing Beauty, wild surmise:
She has a look that hushes the profane,
And lays rebuke upon the Lords of Gain:
Into our souls her soul forever cries:
There is a sacred something in her eyes—
Austerity that humbles with great fear
As if a God were breathing ever near:
She draws our faces toward immortal skies.

Art whispers of the old Disaster, when
The glad Ideal Life was lost to men—
The old Revolt when man defied the Law,
Was driven an exile from the world of dreams,
An exile from the world of ancient Awe:
Art gives the beauty back in broken gleams.

The Night Moths

Out of the night to my leafy porch they came,
A thousand moths. Did He who made the toad
Give them their wings upon the starry road?
Restless and wild they circle round the flame,
Frail wonder-shapes that man can never tame—
Whirl like the blown flakes of December snows,
Tinted with amber, violet and rose,
Marked with hieroglyphs that have no name.

Out of the summer darkness pours the flight:
Unknown the wild processionary they keep.
What lures them to this rush of mad delight?
Why are they called from nothingness and sleep?
Why this rich beauty wandering the night?
Do they go lost and aimless to the deep?

The Greater Glory

HERE once a city blossomed into towers,
And all her highways throbbed with marching feet;
But sorcery has toucht her: home and street
Are husht in ruin, and the Secret Powers
Have summoned the dust—where Time's last beauty
flowers—
Have shattered the glory, hurled the grandeur down.
Yet here one lone tree lifts its leafy crown,
Stands ghostly still, where once were roaring hours.

And now that ruined city grows august,
Attains a greater glory in her dust.
She sleeps as a silver wonder in the moon,
In that strange loveliness that time unveils;
While from that lone tree over the dim lagoon,
Falls the rich rapture of the nightingales!

The Sorrow in Things

O WIND of the Fall, you keep the eternal round:
I know your ancient grief: you are the cry
Out of all beauty that must ever die.
Moan thru the ruined world: you are the sound
That sorrows up from life's primordial ground,
The eternal pain in the minor chords that sigh
In all things dwelling under this mortal sky—
A grief for something that is never found.

Whence has it come, this pathos of the years?
Perhaps the Potter, when he mixt the clay,
Wept over it all, and did not turn away;
And so some wild drops of his wistful tears
Raised men above the ephemera of a day,
And husht their souls to dare the great careers.

The Gain

HERE we are huddled in a world of dread,
 Encampt at night upon a plain of tombs,
 Surrounded by the dangers and the dooms,
Perplex by rumors of a world ahead—
Hints from a scroll no mortal ever read.
 Yet here is our task, to break the baffling bars;
 While over us is the silence of the stars,
And under us the silence of the dead.

There will be sorrows waiting on all roads,
Long heartbreak ere we reach the high abodes;
 Still we must snatch from these a certain gain,
Press a rich honey from the bitter years:
 No heart can comfort till it has known pain,
No eyes can see until they have known tears.

The Changeless

ALL things have only a little fleeting day:
The mountains rise and crumble, grain by grain,
Under the eternal scourge of wind and rain.
The cities rise and roar and pass away:
Kingdoms expand to be the final prey
Of Time, the all-devouring: even the gods
May totter and let fall their withered rods.
"Change!" is the cry the restless worlds obey.

Even in the worlds to come, there is no spell
That lays the changeless upon Heaven and Hell;
But here on earth *one* thing is constant, one
Unchangeable all lands and ages thru.
Will it outlast the earth, outlast the sun—
The plunder of the Many by the Few?

Bond or Free?

MAN surges onward: is he bond or free?

Has he the dignity of the lofty gods

Who face in freedom all the mighty odds?

Or is he fashioned even as the tree

Is fashioned by the acorn—as the sea

Is moved by the moon—as the leaf of autumn flies

Before the wind that howls along the skies?

Is man driven blindly by some old Decree?

The soul shrinks at these questions, shrinks aghast:

Is man's life only the push of all the past?

Do weird hands reach from far ancestral towers

To strip him of his freedom, clog his flight,

Till he is only a puppet in the fight,

A pusht pawn of the high Inscrutable Powers?

Immortable

"The gift of God is eternal life."

—THE BIBLE.

DEATH beyond death is waiting on ahead:

We now are mortals markt for doom and dust,
As an old robe is markt for moth and rust.
A little while men eat this earthly bread,
Then pass on to the nations of the dead,
But go with feet still muffled in their shrouds
To the austere sifting of the vanisht crowds,
Till on some souls the eternal sleep is shed.

We are not now immortal, and yet we
Have power to rouse the deathless in us, be
Kin to the gods in their victorious round.
Yes, we can cast away the mortal hull
And battle upward to the Living Ground.
No, not immortal but immortable!

The Drifting Crowds

"These are subject to the second death."

—ANCIENT SCRIPTURES.

AIMLESS, unthinking, with their souls unfed,
No light before their feet, no star to guide,
And in their hearts only a peacock pride,
They never dream of the immortal bread,
Nor dream of nobler destinies ahead.
No whisper stirs their spirits from Above:
No valor takes the chance of selfless love:
They are the dead who follow the marching dead.

They are the untimely born, the unprepared,
The souls unready for the test of earth.
Some dim Power drew them to disastrous birth:
They were unready but they were not spared;
And yet one mercy waits them—endless sleep,
Where Oblivion scatters poppy in the Deep.

Lorenzo Dying

Lorenzo the Magnificent, the princely
plunderer of Florence, died unabsolved by
Savonarola, April 8, 1492.

"BEGONE, ye fawning priests!" Lorenzo cried:

"What is your easy absolution worth

To one fast fading on the brink of earth?

Ye plunged no rapier into my heart's old pride;

So when you said I am safe with God, you lied!

Send Savonarola, terrible priest and seer:

When his lips speak, the Saints bend down to hear:

His words have weight in Heaven, and will abide."

And so the great priest entered, grave and tall,

Crying: "Lorenzo, to get right with God

You must give back to the people their very all,

Your plundered riches; else the judgment rod

Will leave you tramping the flames of Hell unshod!"

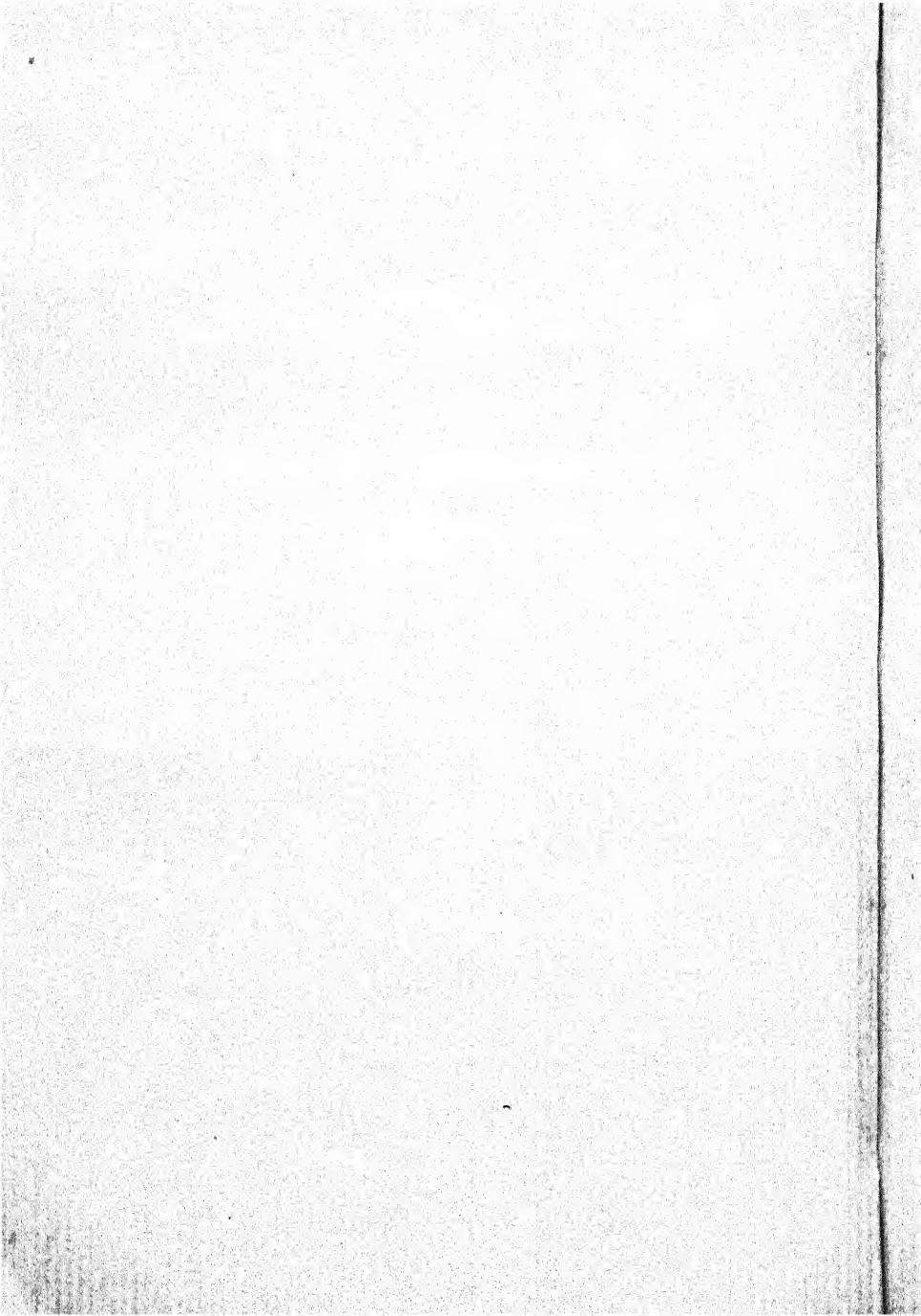
Lorenzo turned his dying face to the wall.

The Night of Brahm

THIS starry universe of life and light,
This vast immensity of pulsing power,
Shall all be folded like a twilight flower:
No more the millionous multitudes in flight:
All will be buried beyond sound and sight,
And Kosmos sink into the Night of Brahm—
Prodigious sleep, immense mysterious calm,
Tenebrean darkness, universal night.

Again shall Brahm (where nothing moves or mars)
Slumber upon eternity and the stars,
While the dim Night Norns weave the dreaming hours.
Aeons shall wane away and yet the eyes
Of Brahm shall slumber, and the Omnific Powers
Wait for the slow long-lingering dawn to rise.

A MEMORY OF YOUTH



This poem is a reminiscence of my early schooldays in California, when I went to an old redwood school-house, where for three months I came under the magic spell of The Enchanter, Harry G. Hill, a teacher who loved great poetry and who taught me to love it also. Thus I came to know Tennyson and Bryant to whom I refer in the poem. This teacher, this beloved teacher, left an indelible mark upon my life. Joy and victory attend him on the long roads ahead!

April 23, 1932.

The Enchanter

I

I SEE the school with its one stark room,
Scribbled with weather-stains,
Where a captive bee with a ceaseless boom
Pounded the window-panes.

The rusty stove, from a zigzag crack,
Spewed ashes on the floor;
While the droning clock, on the wall far back,
Notcht off the Evermore.

And I was there as a boy, my brow
Deep-buried in a book,
Dreaming perhaps of a leafy bough
Above some twinkling brook—

Dreaming perhaps of that pine-top near
The sky, too near for rest,
Where an eagle builded, year by year,
Her wind-stirred, clamoring nest—

Dreaming perhaps of that blasted fir
Where canyon waters croon,
And where the red-cap woodpecker
Pounds all the afternoon—

Dreaming perhaps of my flock of sheep
When darkness husht the streams,
And prowling panthers broke my sleep,
Stabbing the night with screams.

2

It was far in the West by a lonely road,
Dusty and gray and long,
When suddenly into the school-house strode
A sorcerer of Song.

Had he come from the Lost Atlantis isle,
Where sea-drowned cities lie?
There was old sorrow in his smile,
Old marvel in his eye.

There was within his soul's great deep
Enchantment and the spells,
Hidden like music laid asleep
In dried-up desert wells.

He opened to us the lyric doors
Of the deeper world that waits,
Throbbing behind our skies and shores,
Pulsing thru lives and fates.

He read from a poet of golden rhyme,
Who mourns the dying years,
Who pours the eternal pain of time
Into his song of Tears.

He read from another who hushed with awe
My wistful boyish breath—
Him who in youthful vision saw
Life in long march with Death.

He read to us all from the great of old,
From the shining poet clan,
Who bring again the Age of Gold,
When youth and wonder ran.

Sometimes he told of Arthur's Court,
Of high-heart Galahad,
Of tourneys and tempestuous sport,
Of heroes nobly mad—

Of helmed horsemen riding the night
By grange and low lagoon,
While high in air some castled hight
Hung dark against the moon.

He never tired of tragic dooms,
Of old chivalric hours,
Of daring dreams, and knightly tombs
Watcht by immortal towers.

And as the vibrant verses flew
Impassioned from his tongue,
He seemed to change: his sad face grew
Mysteriously young.

3

Sometimes he led the children out
To hill or woodland wild:
We followed him with joyous shout—
He too a happy child.

He walkt as one whose heart is held
By some long look ahead,
As one who sees the great of eld,
The dead who are not dead.

And when he was too stirred to speak,
He turned a wistful eye
As if instinctively to seek
Some signal from the sky.

He also heard the meadow-lark
Defy the world's long grief,
Or paused upon the path to mark
The falling of a leaf.

Sometimes he paused as if he heard
Strange music in the air—
As if some Vision of the Word
Hung a bright moment there.

Was he some pilgrim from the prime,
Tuned to life's deeper themes?
Had he descended into time
Thru some long night of dreams?

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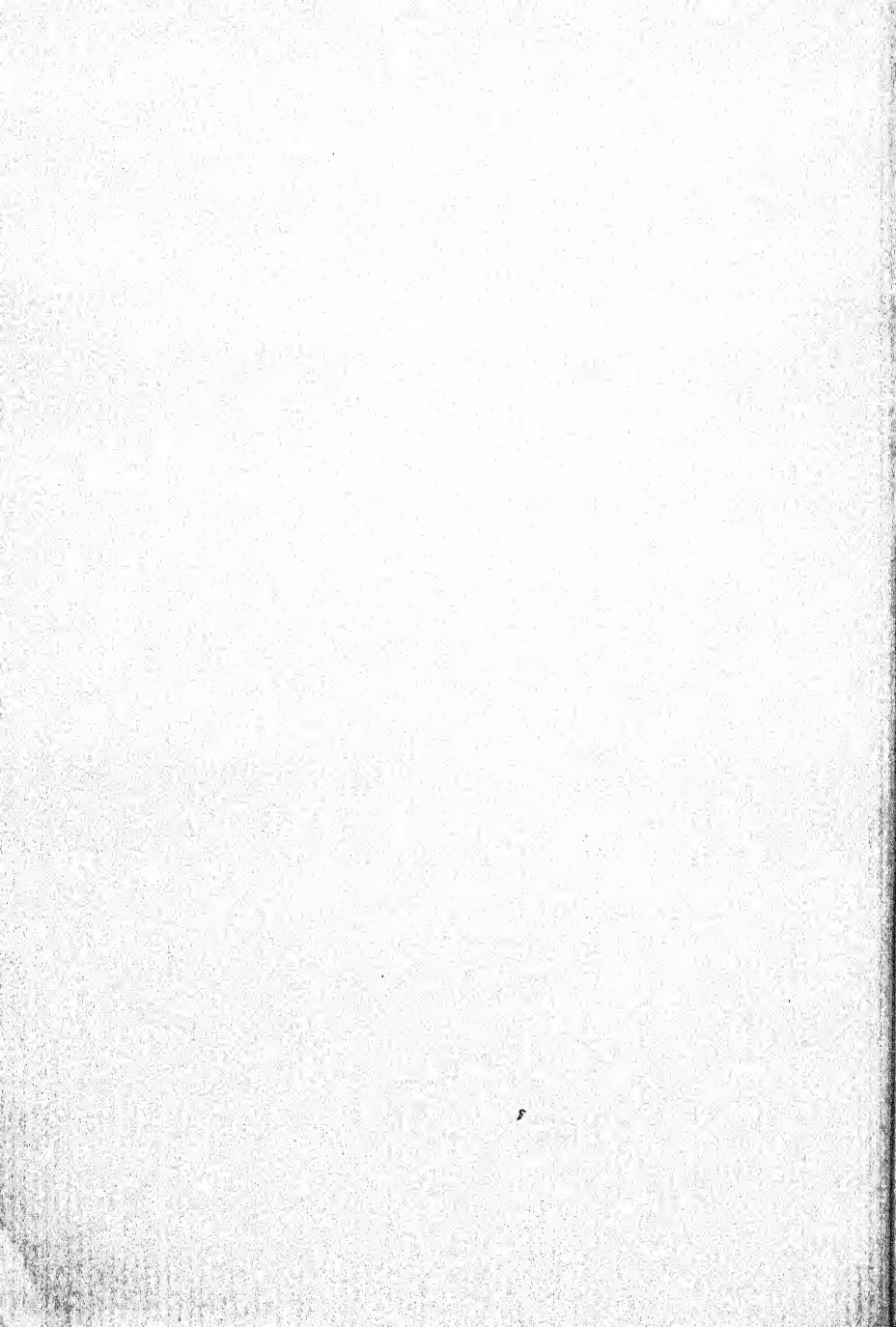
One day he vanisht from our sight
And from the paths of men—
Withdrew with his enchanted light,
Never to come again.

He passed beyond our mortal reach,
Beyond the peaks afar;
Yet by his magic left on each
The tincture of some star.

I wonder now what place he fills
In what high-heart romance:
I'm sure he's on melodious hills
And where the children dance.

And when God passes, he must pause
And hark with deep regard
To hear him plead the poet's cause;
For God, too, is a bard.

SONGS TO THE DIVINE MOTHER



The Divine Mother Remembered

IN MY mystical youth, I saw behind mountain and clod
A luminous something that lookt like the Woman in God.
Wherever I ran on the hills She was there at my side—
A spirit as chaste as a flower and as dear as a bride.

It was You, O Mother, and you toucht my lips with your
wine,

And gave me the madness that makes of all beauty a
shrine;

And You sent me a dream of the maiden God fashioned
for me—

The sea-girl I followed of old in the spray of the sea—
The one I shall seek on all roads, as I hear her low calls—
The one I shall follow and follow till the last star falls.

I stand on the cliff and look out on the wind-lifted wave,
And it brings back the dreams that the touch of your
mystery gave;

For You are the sea and her beauty, the sea and her song;
And they send me a sense of the pathos of earth and her
wrong.

It comes from the break of the billow, from the sob of the
reef—

A sense of the tears and the struggle, and the infinite grief.

The Mother of the Many Names

*I am the Queen of the universe, the giver of
all. Altho I am one by my powers, yet I
appear as manifold.*

—RIG VEDA.

IN A thousand dim pools are reflected the ghosts of the sun;
So your shadows on earth have been many, yet You have
been one.

You inhabit Eternity, Mother, the flower of the Prime;
Yet shadows of You have appeared in these chambers of
time.

You husht all the East with your face in the morning of
earth,

In your April of rapture when beauty was breaking to
birth.

It was back in the time of the mystic adoring of Dawn:
It was back in the morning of man, ere the Face was with-
drawn.

You scattered the fire of your song on the wonderful years,
Till men were atremble with joy and mysterious tears;
So the bards of the Vedas beheld You in vision go by,
Beheld you and cried to the dawn a world-echoing cry.

Then you rose on Assyria, rose in the sworded Ishtar
As the Goddess that leads on the march of the bright
morning star.

And you rose in the moon as Astarte on Sidon and Tyre
And sent upon Carthage a marvel of mystical fire.

Where Jehovah projected his shadow and cried his decree
On the strange tribes that huddled in fear by the way of
the sea,

You were there as El Shaddai, "the Mother with nourish-
ing breast";

And wherever were tears, You were there as a mercy and
rest.

Leaning forth to the wind, You whirled on in your lion-
drawn car,

Over Phrygian peaks where You moved a mysterious star.
You were Cybele crowned, the Woman who knew no
defeat:

Your beauty was whispered in Sardis, your altars were
lighted in Crete.

And your glory descended on Cyprus: your name was a
word

Wherein all the sounds of the sea in one music were heard.
You were swift Aphrodite: you rose from the flight of the
foam

To scatter wild beauty on Hellas, white wonder on Rome.

And you shone thru the face of Athena, the sword-
brightened one;
For you stir the delight of the heroes, the lords of the sun.
In the fire of your passion God's warriors stand guard at all
gates
To beat back the rise of the hells, the all-ruining fates.

And afar on the North you were Frigga, and your heart
went wild
When the fire-ship bore out to sea your all-beautiful child.
You stood by the Life-Tree Igdrasil: the boughs felt your
breath,
And the roots knew your grief as they plunged thru the
kingdom of death.

In Egypt men saw you as Isis, the veil-covered one,
The moon-bride of shining Osiris, the Lord of the Sun.
And now we cry out for your beauty, for in You we see
The Woman who was, and who is, and forever shall be.

Divine Aphrodite

I HAIL you, O Woman of women, immortal and mighty:
I hail you adorable Goddess, foam-born Aphrodite!
In the lyrical secret of worlds, you are Woman and
Wonder:
And you move in the chambers of silence, the chariots of
thunder.

I sing to the dawn when you come with your bright hair
blowing;
And I lift up my hands to the sunset that tells of your
going.
There are flashes of fire from your feet on the summits
grown hoary;
And out on the moon-kindled ocean are glints of your
glory.

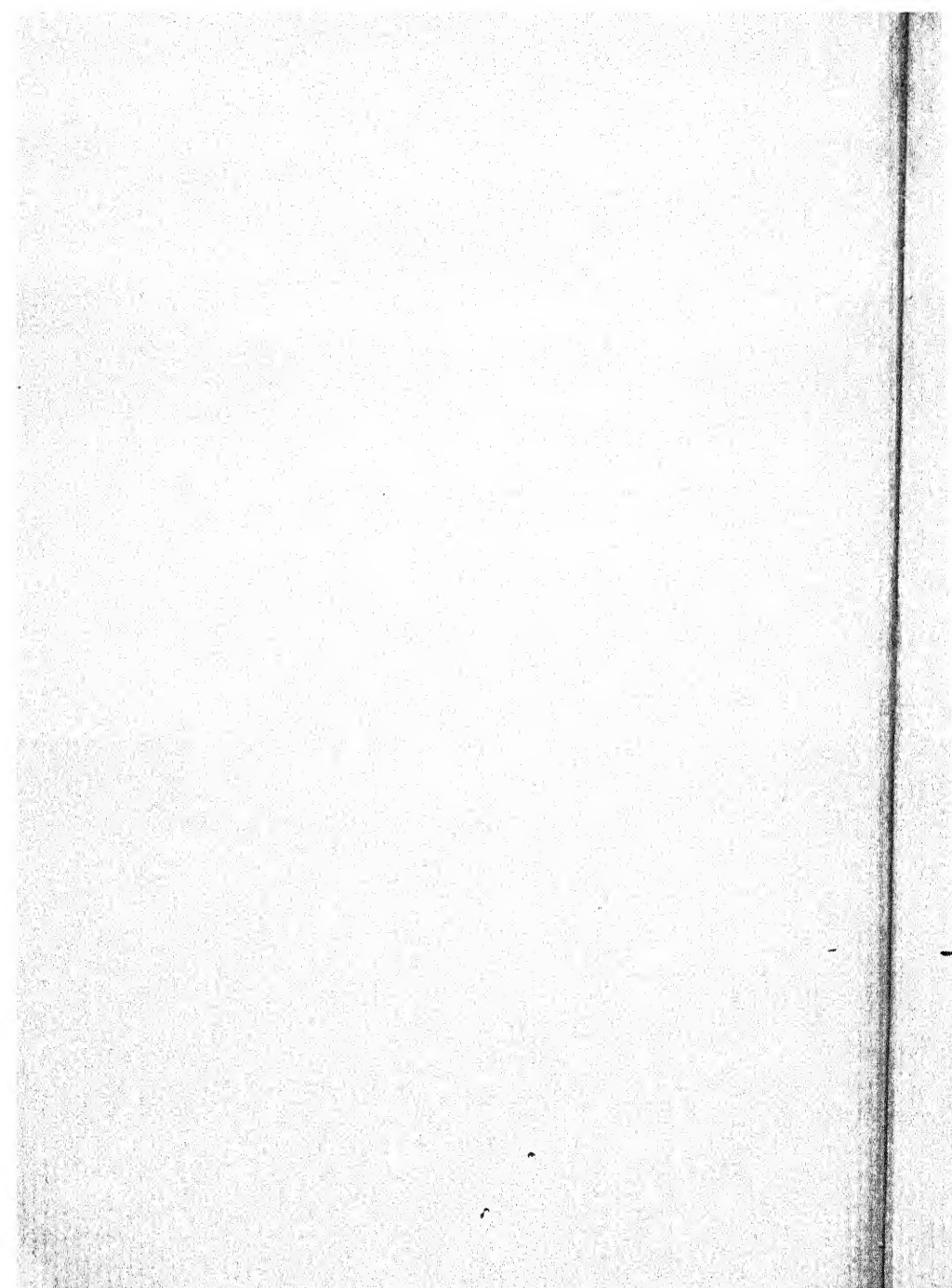
In your face are the raptures of youth and its lyrical rages:
In your song is the passion of God and the flight of the ages.
As I look on your beauty, I kneel in the hush of surrender
That man must make ever to woman, heroic and tender.

For whatever a hero has done—the whole world defying—
He has done it because your still voice to his spirit was
crying.

So I leave all and follow your flight, with a wild heart
yearning;
For you are the Bright Flame and I am caught into the
burning.

I follow your flight and your fire: I follow adoring,
And my soul on the wind of your motion is lifted and soaring.
For your feet they are shod with the speed and the splendor
of Heaven;
And around you are circling forever the stars that are
seven!

LOOKS INTO LIFE



The Toiler: the Hoe-Man of the Ages

Written after seeing Rodin's statue, "The Thinker," the brutalized toiler.

I

WHAT strange awakening shape is this—
What is his breed, his genesis?
Peer into the past: from every age
His visage stares in silent rage.
Down the long centuries he came . . .
Who is he? Ask the sands his name.
Who is he? Ask the leaves that die,
And have no language but a sigh.
Ask the gray fields he plowed for bread
To feed the nations—he, unfed.
Ask the slow vultures as they wheel
Over the battles for a meal.

2

Behold, he is the Toiling Man,
Unresting since the world began.
What blind road has he come to this—
Out of what darkness, what abyss?
Grinding grim blocks in ages gone,
His groans gave Greece the Parthenon:

Out of the deeps of his despair,
The Colosseum whirled in air.
Back somewhere in the night of years,
The bricks of Babel felt his tears.
Back in the ages, stooped with loads,
Silent to curses and to goads,
With panting mouth and sullen lids,
He piled the monstrous Pyramids.
Yea, staggering under stripes and scars,
He heaved huge Cheops to the stars.
The Memphian Sphinxes in their day
Saw him go by as still as they;
And on all roads he ever trod
His silence was his cry to God.

3

He built and beautified the cities—
Gardens where rhymers thrummed their ditties;
Mansions where lolled the idling host,
Whose god is he that idles most;
Temples where pontiffs lit a flame
To gods that winked at all the shame.
His brute hands lifted into air
Bright Babylon, and held her there.
Goaded across Siam, he tore
The jungle out, upflung Angkor,
Carving her churlish stones to whirls
Of gods and cobras and dancing girls.

Yea, out of grief and reeking grime,
He lifted cities into Time—
Lifted their glories huge and high,
And held them glittering in the sky.

4

So in those hands he held the fate
Of empires—carried their doom and date—
The power to wreck the guarded thrones
And leave the world a plain of stones.
Yea, there was strength in that huge girth
To flatten out the belly of earth:
In those bowed shoulders was the might
To draw down whirlwind and the night.
Yet he toiled humbly in all lands,
The fate of nations in his hands—
Toiled at his all-bestowing task,
And why he toiled he did not ask.
He let the centuries go by
Without a word, without a cry.
The stones were silent on the way,
And he groped on as still as they.

5

Behold, O world, the Toiling Man,
Bearing earth's burden and her ban.
Because of his all-giving grace,
Kaisers and kings have held their place—

Because he gave ungrudging toil,
The Lords have had the world for spoil—
Because he gave them all his dower,
Great ladies glittered out their hour.
He clothed these paupers, gave them bed,
Put into their mouths their daily bread.
And his reward? A crust to taste,
An unknown grave upon the waste.
Outcast and cursed, befooled and flayed,
With earth's brute burdens on him laid,
He only reacht out humble hands,
Reacht out his mercies on all lands.
How silent down the world he trod—
How patient he has been with God!

If He Should Come

If JESUS should tramp the streets tonight,
Storm-beaten and hungry for bread,
Seeking a room and a candle light
And a clean though humble bed,
Who would welcome the Workman in,
Though He came with panting breath,
His hands all bruised and his garments thin—
This Workman from Nazareth?

Would rich folk hurry to bind his bruise
And shelter his stricken form?
Would they take God in with his muddy shoes
Out of the pitiless storm?
Are they not too busy wreathing their flowers
Or heaping their golden store—
Too busy chasing the bubble hours
For the poor man's God at the door?

And if He should come where churchmen bow,
Forgetting the greater sin,
Would He pause with a light on his wounded brow,
Would He turn and enter in?

And what would He think of their creeds so dim,
Of their weak, uplifted hands,
Of their selfish prayers going up to Him
Out of a thousand lands?

Walt Whitman

The poem read by Edwin Markham, in
1931, when he unveiled the Whitman bust
in the Hall of Fame, in the New York
University.

I

O SHAGGY god of the ground, barbaric Pan!
I mix some discords in the chant, and yet
I mix triumphant praises in it, too.

You laud "the average man," and yet his feet
Are mired in clay, his soul beholds no star,
Hears only a far faint music from the skies.
You dare announce your optimistic news
That good is good and evil is also good.
Yet, Whitman, there is something wild in the world:
Even Christ found here no place to lay his head.

In woman, too, you miss the morning star:
You sing the brood-mare woman, not the one
Who leads us onward, upward to the skies,
The woman of old romance, the woman of song,
The woman that sings into the poet's dream.

You shout the Ego also: this draws down
Toward dust and ashes: never the upward look
Which sees afar the pure Ideal gleam.
You find all equal: no one is above:
You leave bewildered souls no place to kneel,
Leave them no Altar where their eyes may turn
To Something higher than themselves—perhaps
To Someone veiled in the Wonder above Time.

“Cast out humility!” you cry: “cast out
Obedience, reverence, adoration, awe.”
Yet only when the Ideal gleams on high
Can we behold our imperfections, rise
And struggle on to nobler heights ahead.
Whitman, there is no battle in your song;
Yet true life is a battle and a march,
And in this we are kindred to the gods.

O thunder-throat, you search the world; and yet
You bring no answer to our mortal cry
To know the meaning of the Mystery,
The meaning of the riddle of the world.
Where is your peak, your all-commanding peak?
Dante stood on a height even when in Hell;
But you, O comrade, have no lighted cliff
From which you look on life and see it whole.

Yet after all discountings, mighty bard,
 There is a lordly credit to your name.
 You have broken chains, have given gifts of joy,
 Have drawn our eyes from things polite and pale—
 Things measured, labeled, run into a mold.

Sometimes we hear in your chant
 The belch of chaos, the babble of Caliban;
 And then sometimes we hear sweet homely sounds,
 The lowing of cows, the bustle of heading wheat.
 Your conjuring touch has opened our eyes to see
 A strange, sweet gladness in all common things.
 All scenes, all sounds, all fragrances of earth
 Are hailed as with the glad, free cry of youth:
 They seem blown down from Eden's far-off fields:
 They seem strange things we never knew before.

Two lyrics, torn from Sorrow, lift our hearts—
 Your song of the mock-bird wild with widowed grief,
 Your song of love in tears; and that other song,
 Your chant in lilac-time, when Lincoln lay
 Resting at last in the tender arms of death.

And you have left great words to cheer our hearts—
 Democracy and the dear comrade-love.
 Joy also is your word: it warms the world.
 We feel the joy in your triumphant faith

That life outsoars the darkness of the grave,
That the dead are never captives of the tomb,
But are the pilgrims of Eternity.
Your voice cries clear above the world's dark doubt:
'If death ends all, then alarum, for we are betrayed!'

Now in this hour, this high remembering hour,
I see the eternal Lord of Song bend down
With fragrant, fadeless laurels for your brow,
Lay them with reverence on your honored head,
And leave you in your immortality.

The Escape

I AM tired of the battling city and her devastating roar,
With the never-ending pound of her feet, like billows on a
shore.

So I will escape to the freedom of fields and the pageant of
marching peaks—
Out to the canyon coolness where the secret silence speaks.

And there in the dancing poppies where the birches stand
in ring

I'll stretch out, looking up to the sky, and watch the eagles
swing.

I will drink in the air of morning, alive with the cheer of
the sun,

And exult that my soul and the soul of the world are one.

I will wonder up to the heavens, held high in the Arcane
Will,

High over these swarming tribes of men, these ants in their
little hill.

Yes, I will turn from the fevered joy and the ancient grief
of the city,

With an infinite scorn in my heart for men, and an infinite
pity.

The Curlew

CURLEW, your voice so lost and lone
Seems like an echo of my own.
Your note has sounded on the sands,
Down all the ages in all lands.
Eternally your quavers die
Into the ocean's ancient sigh.
Like mine, O bird, your mournful strain
Rises from life's mysterious pain.

O lonely one, I know your grief
That runs forever, reef to reef.
Your plaintive minors by the sea
Call to the dying dreams in me.
I am your brother, wistful bird,
And in my song your cry is heard.
For I too follow an unknown shore
Where dim waves break forevermore:
I also watch wild billows leap,
But know not from what hidden deep.
I too discern far out at sea
Faint lands that seem to signal me.
Like you I weave the hours that throng
Into a web of wistful song:

Like you I touch the passing years
With wild notes and a sense of tears,
Knowing not whence I come nor why,
Yet strangely glad of sea and sky.

No Sanctuary

An event that happened in November, 1924.

OVER the hills with terror-cry,
An eagle burst into the sky.
Thousands of crows pursued him, filling
The heavens with sounds of curse and killing.
They rusht in raucous murder crowds,
Stung by some madness of the clouds.
Over my head there came to me
The thunder of an upper sea.

The noble bird, in desperate hope,
Fled to a camp upon the slope,
Crasht down among the men, that they
Might keep his enemies at bay.
It was good reasoning to suppose
That men have higher souls than crows.

What happened as a crowning proof
Of how divine a thing is man?
The men saw tragedy and ran
To shield the bird beneath their roof.
They scared away the murder bands,
Taking him in with happy hands.

They brought him food and water, glad
To soothe a fugitive, terror-mad.
They felt the thrill of his great eyes
Still burning with the upper skies.
They loosed him then to the airy spaces,
To gladden upward-looking faces.

No, no, you're wrong, my pen! Instead,
They got their guns and shot him dead!
And now, in bitter shame, I know
How little a man transcends a crow!

Pan Encountered

PEOPLE, people, everywhere,
Leave the kitchen, pot and pan—
Leave the ledger, leave the care:
Come—I have encountered Pan!

Leave your tables, leave your tools:
Lock the door and take the key:
Off to woods and windy pools:
Lift the boughs and follow me.

Some are saying Pan is dead.
Crying out there is no proof
That red berries crown his head,
That he has a forkéd hoof.

But their words are empty chaff:
Let them have their fleering jest:
I have heard his sun-bright laugh.
I have seen his heaving breast.

It was in a woodland deep,
Where the little rivers run:
He leapt lightly out of sleep,
Two horns glistening in the sun.

In from hill and hidden glade,
Little peoples laught and ran:
Doubters, leave the dust of trade:
Come with me—encounter Pan!

The Street of the Gallant Gentlemen

ALL my days a delicate dream
Has lit my life with beckoning gleam—
The hope of seeing Spain, and then
“The Street of the Gallant Gentlemen.”
How all the hearts of them must flame
To have a street with such a name!

I know just how the city shines
Among her fragrant groves and vines.
It is in sunny Spain somewhere:
Ah, would that I had lodgings there,
And could step out on happy feet
And flare light-hearted down the street!

I am quite certain I should see
Young cavaliers with gartered knee,
Who lightly lift the jeweled whip
Or touch the kerchief to the lip;
Or, singing to their soft guitars,
Send dreams upon a night of stars.

And the soft sighs of ladies there
Will turn my heart to trembling air;

And one, yes, one among them all,
Will let her dark mantilla fall,
That I may pick it up and see
A sparkle in her eye for me.

Some day I'll take my pilgrim staff
And sally forth with lightsome laugh.
Oh, I shall go so debonair,
With jeweled sword and powdered hair—
Sure that some spirit in my feet
Will guide me to the gallant street.

El Dorado

INTO dim and nameless lands,
Over dry and desert places,
We have followed waving hands,
We have followed fading faces.

All in vain we follow dreams—
Follow echo, follow shadow.
Where's the source of golden streams,
Where the longed-for El Dorado?

Must we then forever fly
Over hill and over hollow?
Still forever hear the cry:
"Follow, mortal—follow, follow?"

Provence

PROVENCE, you were in a sky
Tought with hues that will not die.
From your heaven a million larks
Showered their notes from dawns to darks—
Showered their songs so far and fine
Distance made them more divine.

Provence, were you really there,
Made of mortal earth and air—
With your Courts of Love and Story,
Lighting life with tender glory—
There, with all your music-makers,
Wandering minstrels, world-forsakers—
There, with all their thousand choirs—
Troubadours with trembling lyres,
Weaving rondeaus and rondels,
Sonnets, ballades, villanelles?

Provence, were you really there,
Made of mortal earth and air?
Land of mystery and mirth,
Were you really on the earth?
Did your forests fill the glade,
Did they cast a mortal shade?

Or were you a phantom gleam,
Just a kingdom in a dream—
All a flight of shadow-vales,
Roses, lovers, nightingales?

This I can not know for sure;
Yet your beauty will endure,
For this little song I sing
Turns you to a deathless thing;
And tho you were vision-made,
You will last till mountains fade.

The Unseen Pilot

I SAIL a sea, but I never know
Who is the Pilot, for he sits alone.
Yes, Someone is up at the wheel, altho
His face is hidden, his name unknown.

Does He call for my help in his strife with the sea?
Should I haul at the halyard and shorten sails?
Has He left the course of the ship to me,
Or left it all to the tides and gales?

Ah, never yet have his still lips stirred:
He is ever silent whatever my cry;
Yet I keep high heart tho He utters no word—
Never tells me the star He is steering by.

Why?

THE storm that washt his field away,
Watered my field for the harvest day:
Lightnings that burned his proud abode,
Lighted my feet on a dangerous road:
Gales that hurled his ship to the deep,
Drove mine home to the harbor sleep.



The Upward March

THE rise of man is endless: live in hope:
All stars are gathered in his horoscope.
The brute man of the planet, he will pass,
Vanish like breath of vapor on a glass;
And from this quaking pulp of life will rise
The Super-man, child of the higher skies.
God-quicken'd, he will break these mortal bars,
Laugh, and reach out his hands among the stars.



The Look Ahead

I AM done with the years that were: I am quits:
I am done with the dead and old.
They are mines worked out: I delved in their pits:
I have saved their grain of gold.

Now I turn to the future for wine and bread:
I have bidden the past adieu.
I laugh and lift hand to the years ahead:
"Come on: I am ready for you!"